

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life
Held on January 25, 2013
SGW H-762, 10am

PRESENT: Mr. Andrew Woodall (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Mr. Kavian Abhari, Ms. Petra Alves (representing Ms. Marie-Josée Allard), Mr. Gerald Beasley, Mr. Ken Bissonnette (representing Mr. Daniel Houde), Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Mr. Jeansil Bruyère, Ms. Melanie Drew, Mr. Sharon Fraenkel, Mr. Veryan Goodship, Ms. Hannah Hackney, Mr. Paul Jerajian, Mr. Howard Magonet, Ms. Nadine Montour, Mr. Sean Nolan, Ms. Irene Petsopoulis, Ms. Tanya Poletti (representing Mr. Bradley Tucker), Mr. Andrew Roberts, Ms. Stephanie Sarik, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Dr. Cameron Skinner, Ms. Jenessa Speed, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Olivia Taddio, Ms. Lorraine Toscano.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Dr. Stéphane Brutus, Ms. Sharon Hunter, Ms. Alexis Suzuki.

ABSENT: Mr. Jacques Lachance, Ms. Emily Sheepy.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Goodship moved to approve the agenda. Dr. Skinner seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed Ms. Jenessa Speed, who would be replacing Ms. Katherine Hedrich on CCSL as the Student Accounts representative. The Chair also noted those members who were absent with regrets and those who were representing them in their absence.

Mr. Woodall congratulated the IEAC for their Cultural Diversity Week that was a great success with great food.

Ms. Alves reported that Hospitality Concordia had recently announced that internal users at the university, meaning students, staff and faculty, who were organizing internal university related activities, would no longer be subject to room rental fees for any spaces under Hospitality. She noted that more information was available on the Planning an Event on Campus webpage, including a list of criteria. The new policy would take effect for any event held as of February 1, 2013, whether they were booked before or after this date. Ms. Alves encouraged everyone to take a look at the new rates and to contact her if they had any questions.

The Chair wished to acknowledge the initiative of Ms. Sheahan and other Student Services directors, as well as the Student Parent Association of Concordia for their promotion of healthy living by offering approximately 800 Concordia students a \$25 discount on a new membership or a personal training session at Le Gym or Le Centre. Mr. Woodall added that the funding to support this initiative came from the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) as part of an annual healthy living and eating campaign. This campaign also helped to fund the Farmer's Market in the fall, as well as to redesign the Healthy Eating brochure out of Health Services.

The Chair congratulated Mr. Magonet, as well as Ms. Marlene Gross of Counselling & Development, for their organization of the Re-Discover Concordia Fair and the Welcome Meet and Greet that were held on January 24, 2013. Both events were a great success and very engaging and beneficial for new Concordia students.

Ms. Taddio announced that she, along with some other students and the Centre 2110, and with support from the CSU, had initiated the "Love Doesn't Hurt Campaign", focusing on developing awareness about emotional abuse and preventing it on campus and among Concordia's student population. There would be several speakers and events, however the campaign was still in its early development. Ms. Taddio encouraged members of the Council to contact her via Ms. Broad if they had any questions or comments regarding the campaign. The Communications Studies Student Association was also involved, with everyone's goal to achieve a more healthy and safe university experience.

The Chair noted several upcoming important events and dates at the university. The CSU Winter Orientation would be taking place the week of January 28, 2013. The Concordia University Small Grants Program deadline for applications was January 30, 2013. The program offers up to \$1,000 in funding to support student projects such as conferences or events that are generally more academically inclined. The deadline for the CCSL Special Projects is February 8, 2013 at 5pm and the CCSL Outstanding Contribution and Volunteer Recognition Awards nominations deadline is February 15, 2013 at 5pm. Mr. Woodall encouraged all members of the Council to spread the word regarding these deadlines to fellow students, staff and faculty.

Mr. Beasley informed the Council that the library would be launching an online user survey from January 28 to February 15, 2013 to students, staff and faculty for their feedback on what they think about the library services and spaces. There would also be a prize draw to give incentive for completing the survey. Mr. Beasley asked that everyone encourage their colleagues to participate, as this would be vital information for the library.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 30, 2012

The Chair wished to amend Item 4.3 Review of “ASFA Talks” Application for Special Projects Funding. Mr. Brutus had asked how much funding was remaining for the winter 2013 semester applications and Ms. Broad had provided a figure of approximately \$84,000. Mr. Woodall asked to amend the amount to read \$73,500.

Mr. Goodship moved to approve the amended minutes from the meeting of November 30, 2012 and Mr. Bruyère seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 HoJo Request for Increase to Annual Funding

The Chair reminded the Council that the CSU Off Campus Housing and Job Bank (HoJo) had made an official request to the CCSL to increase its annual contribution from \$15,000 to \$20,000. The Chair welcomed the Coordinator of HoJo, Ms. Leanne Ashworth, to the meeting. Ms. Ashworth was asked to attend in order to respond to several questions that had come from her original presentation and request for more funding.

Question 1: Will additional funding of \$5,000 annually from CCSL allow Concordia graduate students to have better access to the services provided by HoJo, such as access to its database?

Ms. Ashworth reported that as of this time, the CCSL was the only provider of funds to help graduate students have access to the HoJo website. HoJo was currently looking into finding other sources of funding to help assist with this aspect. Ms. Ashworth noted that students wish to have access to information on housing and jobs prior to arriving in Montreal, and that would be a service that HoJo would like to improve. At this point, the HoJo staff encourages students to visit the office upon arrival, however this is often not as beneficial as having early access to information on housing prices and neighbourhoods to see what is actually available. Ms. Ashworth confirmed that the additional \$5,000 would not go directly to supporting just graduate student access, however it would be part of improving overall access to the database for everyone, graduate students included.

Question 2: Will an increase in access to HoJo’s services for graduate students be dependent on passing a fee-levy? And what contingencies exist if the fee-levy does not pass?

Ms. Ashworth confirmed that HoJo was currently in discussions with the GSA regarding the possibility of a fee-levy. She noted that the GSA councillors and executives appeared to be supportive of the fee-levy. HoJo was working on having the fee-levy approved this year, however there was no way of knowing whether it would pass. The fee-levy would allow for sustainable funding to open up services to graduate students.

Mr. Magonet asked what would be required to have access improved for graduate students, regardless of whether or not the fee-levy was passed. Ms. Ashworth reiterated the importance of improving access to information for students prior to their arrival in Montreal. Therefore there would be a need for more staff working to register students online. From the time a student is admitted to the university to the deadline for dropping classes, HoJo does not have access to information on these students from the university, therefore there is a great demand on

staff to acquire and enter the student's information into the online system independently. By introducing graduate students into this as well, the demand on staff would significantly increase. Ms. Ashworth said that staffing of the office for other work is necessary as well. There is ultimately a need for more employees at HoJo. Mr. Woodall added that the technicality of simply being allowed to provide services to the graduate student population was currently an obstacle for HoJo. There would need to be a more formal recognition and contribution from the graduate student membership. Ms. Ashworth confirmed that graduate students could visit the HoJo office at any time and receive assistance, however accessing the online system on their own before hand was not an option. It was pointed out that the majority of graduate students are from out of town; therefore not physically being in Montreal was an on-going issue.

Dr. Skinner asked whether the electronic letter from the university confirming a student's acceptance would be sufficient proof that they were going to attend Concordia, and would this not be adequate for HoJo to use to enter them into their database. Ms. Ashworth confirmed that for undergraduate students this would be sufficient, however graduate students are not registered in the database regardless of any proof. She added that to use the letter to enter thousands of students' information into the database would still require many staff hours compared to receiving a list from the university that could be more easily entered into the system.

Question 3: Will additional funding of \$5,000 annually from CCSL allow HOJO to increase their services at the Loyola campus?

Ms. Ashworth confirmed that the additional funding would allow HoJo to increase their outreach, including having someone working in the Loyola office. There would consequently need to have a push in promoting the Loyola services, as well as modifying current advertising items to include the Loyola campus.

Question 4: Has HOJO considered using volunteers instead of paid employees to meet their staffing needs? Is this a possibility? What implications would this have (or not) on any collective agreements?

Ms. Ashworth said that there might be a role for volunteers at HoJo, but not to replace any of the staff that are currently employed. Volunteers could be used to assist with events or distributing flyers and information in various locations, however they would still require training and staff to oversee the program, and to ensure consistency within the program. Ms. Ashworth also noted that commitment and reliability among volunteers was generally less dependable than paid employees.

Question 5: In light of the current housing issues facing international students, how would an increase in funding from CCSL help to ease this kind of problem?

Ms. Ashworth revealed that HoJo was currently under more strain due to the recent issues surrounding housing for international students. She noted that there were many exchange students in need of short-term housing, that the language barrier with most Continuing Education students led to longer meeting times to resolve housing issues, and graduate students not having access before arriving in Montreal was an on-going struggle. Ms. Ashworth said that continued outreach would be vital and the aim would be to prevent housing issues rather than try to fix them. Ms. Ashworth admitted that the \$5,000 in additional funding would likely not resolve the housing issue, however it would allow HoJo to remain open for more hours and to improve their services to students.

Ms. St-Laurent added that there was a disclaimer on the HoJo website that advised students to be aware of questionable housing and to refrain from signing a lease until they had arrived in the city and had personally seen the accommodations.

Mr. Woodall thanked Ms. Ashworth for her time and a discussion ensued on whether or not to increase the funding by an additional \$5,000 annually.

Although the Council members were supportive of additional funding to support HoJo's services, several concerns were raised, such as the fact that there was no definitive plan for how the additional funding would be spent and its outcome. It was suggested that a report be submitted by HoJo outlining how the \$5,000 was spent, as well as for tangible results. The Council also noted that there was no way of forecasting future budget

constraints, therefore the additional funding could be revisited if necessary at the end of the three-year budget cycle.

Ms. Taddio put forth the following motion, seconded by Ms. Sarik:

Be it resolved that the annual financial contribution of \$15,000 from the CCSL Special Projects Fund to the CSU Off-Campus Housing and Job Bank (HoJo) be increased to an annual financial contribution of \$20,000 for the duration of the 2012-2015 budget cycle. It is understood that this amount may be revised based on future budget restrictions. In addition to submitting its regular annual report with a year-end budget statement to CCSL, HoJo will be required to specify how the additional funds have been used in order to support services to graduate students, Loyola outreach or additional volunteer training as discussed in the CCSL meeting of January 25, 2013.

The motion passed unanimously.

4.2 Update on H-110 Renovations

Ms. Boujaklian informed the Council that room H-110 would be under major renovations over the next 8 to 9 months, from April 17 until December 2013. There would be a complete overhaul of the space, including ventilation, lighting and seating. Ms. Alves confirmed that all classes previously scheduled in H-110 have been moved to MB1.120.

5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

5.1 Sub-Committees

CCSL Special Projects

The Chair reported that the sub-committee had met to revisit the criteria, guidelines and selection process for the Special Projects. Their focus was on simplifying the process for students in order to get better applications. The sub-committee reviewed technical aspects of the application form and guidelines, hoping to provide clarification, as well as concrete samples, specifically of budgets, for students to reflect on. The sub-committee felt that it would be important for there to be transparency around the evaluation process. The larger question raised was whether or not recurrent funding of projects should continue. The sub-committee believed that the nature of some projects would not allow them to become self-sustaining and would therefore always require support from sources such as CCSL, while others should be encouraged to seek alternative sources of revenue. The sub-committee will meet again to continue its review and anticipate having more concrete recommendations for the Council in March or April 2013. Mr. Woodall reminded the Council that the next deadline for applications of Special Projects was February 8, 2013 at 5pm. The current amount remaining in the fund for winter 2013 applications was \$73,902.82.

CCSL Awards

As the Chair of the CCSL Awards sub-committee, Mr. Magonet announced that the deadline to submit nominations was February 15, 2013 at 5pm. The sub-committee was still in need of members: three undergraduate students; one graduate student; one Student Services staff from CCSL; and one faculty member from CCSL. Mr. Magonet encouraged the Council to join him in this rewarding process and asked that anyone interested contact Ms. Broad for more information. The nominations review meeting would take place at the end of February or in early March 2013. The CCSL Awards Night was set for April 11, 2013 at the Loyola Chapel.

5.2 Update on Review of CCSL Mandate

The Chair informed the Council that the ad-hoc committee had met to review the CCSL Mandate, in an attempt to raise the bar on the CCSL's impact and influence on student life issues. Currently, the CCSL's main focus was on the distribution of funds, selection of outstanding contribution awards, and preparation of the Student Services budget every three years. The ad-hoc committee recognized the time limitations of CCSL in broadening its impact. The ad-hoc committee was developing a proposal for CCSL for a research project on student engagement. There appeared to be a university wide interest in student engagement, specifically from the Provost Office. The ad-hoc committee wished to consider what barriers impede student participation, as well as to provide success stories of how others have engaged students. The Chair was hopeful that the ad-hoc committee would have a more tangible proposal by the March CCSL meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Alves reported that Hospitality Concordia had launched their new management software on January 7, 2013. The new software would be more efficient, with several highlights such as a calendar to view availability of specific spaces, and necessary waivers built in to the system. Ms. Alves added that training sessions would be taking place for students, staff and faculty towards the end of February 2013. She noted that any technical difficulties would be addressed by IITS through their helpline at extension 7613 or help@concordia.ca. For general feedback, Ms. Alves encouraged everyone to contact her directly or to call the main Hospitality number at extension 4999. She maintained that the department would be welcoming feedback and questions on an on-going basis to improve the system's functionality.

Ms. Toscano informed the Council that student tuition was due the following week, and that students would now be able to pay online through their portal with Interac debit payments. The payment would be secure, efficient and automatic, with no processing time, and she encouraged students to take advantage of the new system. Unfortunately, there were currently only four banks participating: BMO, Scotia Bank, Royal Bank and TD. Ms. Speed urged students with other financial institutions to contact their bank to encourage them to join the new system without charging user fees. Ms. Speed said that information regarding the new system would be made available in an email blast to all students, as well as on the university portal.

Mr. Jerajian wished to congratulate the men's basketball team for their recent victory over McGill. It was a well-fought and well-earned win.

Mr. Roberts reported that the third annual Sustainable Champions Gala would be held on March 5, 2013. He encouraged the Council to spread the word for nominations of fellow Concordians for their contribution to the social, ecological and economic well-being of the university. The deadline for nominations was February 15, 2013. Mr. Roberts would send information on the awards to Ms. Broad, who would send it out to members of the Council.

Mr. Fraenkel told the Council that he had met with Ms. Caroline Bourbonnière, President of ASFA, regarding the "ASFA Talks" project that CCSL was supporting through the Special Projects Fund. Mr. Fraenkel noted that he was now personally involved with assisting ASFA to secure a venue, speakers and additional funding. He asked whether or not ASFA had provided their updated budget in order to claim the pending \$1,000 in funding from CCSL. Ms. Broad confirmed that they had not provided an updated budget as requested following the November 30, 2012 CCSL meeting, and had yet to claim the initially approved amount of \$3,500 from the fund. Ms. Broad anticipated that they would provide their updated budget for review at the March CCSL meeting.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2013 in S-H-769 at 10am.

8. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Ms. Hackney motioned to terminate the meeting. Mr. Goodship seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.